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**Environment Department Reissues a "Drinking Water Advisory"
for Valley Estates Water and Sewer Association**

(Santa Fe, NM) –The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Drinking Water Bureau has advised the Valley Estate Water and Sewer Association to issue a "Drinking Water Advisory" for its consumers.

The Valley Estate Water and Sewer Association serves approximately 200 consumers in Rio Arriba County. The water system has been on a "Drinking Water Advisory" for an extended period of time. The system also received a compliance order in February 2003 for exceeding the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for Nitrate. The "Drinking Water Advisory" is being reissued due to results received on late Wednesday afternoon, October 13 that Nitrate again exceeded the MCL. NMED requires that the system notify all customers served by that system of this finding.

Consumers of the Valley Estate Water and Sewer Association water system are advised not to give the water to infants or pregnant consumers. Infants who drink water could become seriously ill and, if untreated, may die. Symptoms include shortness of breath and blue baby syndrome. Blue baby syndrome is indicated by blueness of the skin. Symptoms in infants can develop rapidly, with health deteriorating over a period of days. Although infants are at greatest risk, pregnant and nursing women and children under 8 years of age should limit their intake of tap water until nitrate levels decrease. If symptoms occur, consumers of the water system should seek medical attention immediately.

Water, juice, and formula for children under six months of age should not be prepared with tap water. **Do not boil the water.** Boiling, freezing, filtering, or letting water stand does not reduce the nitrate level; in fact, boiling can make the nitrates more concentrated. Adults and children older than six months can drink the tap water, however, if you have specific health concerns, you may wish to consult your doctor.

Nitrate in drinking water can come from natural, industrial, or agricultural sources (including septic systems and run-off). Levels of nitrate in drinking water can vary throughout the year. The water system is in the process of installing a new well, which should be completed in the near future.

The New Mexico Department of Health has also been notified and will remain on alert for any health effects linked to this water quality issue. Consumers of the water system may call (505) 476-3028 if they have any water-related health concerns.

For more information contact Kenneth Richard, Geoscientist, NMED, at (505) 827-1400 x.1009 or Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.